

SAN JACINTO RIVER WASTE PITS SUPERFUND SITE

QUESTION: What is EPA doing to keep this site safe until a remedy is selected? When will a remedy be selected?

ANSWER:

- As an extra level of oversight, EPA deployed its Dive Team on December 11, 2015 to physically inspect temporary cap that had been constructed by the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) for the site. The Team found an underwater damaged area of the cap. In response, EPA directed the PRP's to repair the cap under EPA oversight, to physically inspect all other areas of the cap, to sample to determine the extent that dioxins were available to the environment, to install new safety features, including a warning buoy and float system around the cap and a camera monitoring system that will be monitored 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. The PRP's completed the directed cap repair by January 6, 2016.
- Subsequent inspections in March 2016 of the eastern cell of the cap by the Potentially Responsible Parties under EPA oversight identified areas with exposed geotextile fabric or inadequate rock thickness over the geotextile. Repairs of these areas are in progress with completion by March 31, 2016.
- During the week of April 4, 2016, the EPA Dive Team will perform an underwater inspection of the cap including the repaired areas and place samplers within the cap to confirm no dioxin migration through the cap.
- Also during the week of April 4, 2016, the Potentially Responsible Parties will install 4 ground water monitoring wells below the northern waste pits.
- Completion of the new safety features, including the camera monitoring system and the buoy system will occur in April 2016, as well as surface water sampling and sediment sampling.
- In a community meeting on February 17, 2016 EPA committed to accelerate the decision-making review and propose a final remedy for public review in calendar year 2016.

BACKGROUND:

- The San Jacinto River Waste Pits Site is located in Harris County along the banks of the San Jacinto River. The pits were used for disposal of dioxin contaminated paper mill wastes in the 1960's.
- A temporary armored cap was installed by PRP's in 2011 to prevent wastes from washing into the river.